

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 0312

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, CY

SUBJECT: CYPRUS MISSING PERSONS

REF: A. STATE 4767, B. NICOSIA 75

1. IN OUR FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS CYPRUS SUBJECTS WITH MFA SINCE FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT, POL COUNS RAISED MISSING PERSONS ISSUE WITH MFA CYPRUS-GREECE DIRECTOR GENERAL TULUMEN DURING VISIT JANUARY 12 (OTHER TOPICS REPORTED SEPTELS).

2. POL COUNS SAID THAT THE U.S. REMAINED VERY INTERESTED IN SEEING AGREEMENT REACHED ON MISSING PERSONS ISSUE AND THAT WE HOPED NEW ECEVIT GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE GO-AHEAD TO DENKTASH TO WRAP UP REMAINING ISSUES. THE TWO SIDES SEEMED VERY CLOSE TO AGREEMENT AT THIS POINT, AND THE ATTITUDE OF THE ICRC SEEMED TO FAVOR THE TURKISH POSITION -- AS PRESUMABLY THE TURKS HAD ALREADY VERIFIED FOR THEMSELVES. WE CONTINUED TO SEE AGREEMENT ON SETTING UP THE COMMITTEE AS A VERY USEFUL STEP IN OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS.

3. TULUMEN RESPONDED ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

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A. THE MISSING PERSONS ISSUE HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN UP WITH ECEVIT BY THE MFA DURING RECENT DISCUSSIONS OF CYPRUS POLICY, NOR HAS ECEVIT INDICATED ANY INTEREST IN THE ISSUE.

B. AGREEMENT ON MISSING PERSONS HAS BEEN ECLIPSED IN SIGNIFICANCE BY ECEVIT'S PROPOSALS TO TAKE AN INITIATIVE IN EARLY FEBRUARY FOR RESUMPTION OF INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS, BACKED UP BY A TURKISH TERRITORIAL PROPOSAL AND IMPROVED CONSTITUTIONAL

PROPOSAL. THESE STEPS FOCUS DIRECTLY ON THE HEART OF THE CYPRUS PROBLEM, NOT ON PERIPHERAL ISSUES. IT IS FAR BETTER TO LEAVE THE FOCUS THERE THAN TO DISTRACT ATTENTION WITH AN ISSUE THAT CAN BE DEALT WITH IN A PROPER PERSPECTIVE WHEN THE CENTRAL PROBLEMS OF A SETTLEMENT ARE RESOLVED.

C. THE U.S. MADE A GREAT MISTAKE WHEN IT ASKED THE GOT TO BACK WORKING PAPER 3, REV. 3, AND THEN, WHILE THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT WAS ENGAGED IN A DIFFICULT EFFORT TO WIN HIGH LEVEL INTERNAL SUPPORT FOR THAT PAPER, CHANGED THE BASIS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BY ACCEPTING NEW GREEK CYPRIOT REQUIREMENTS. THE MFA DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT IT CAN REPEAT ITS EFFORT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT TO GET AGREEMENT ON A NEW PAPER. THUS, REV. 3 REMAINS THE INTERNALLY AGREED AND OFFICIAL GOT POSITION.

D. THE MFA REMAINS SUSPICIOUS OF GREEK CYPRIOT INTENTIONS TO USE THE MISSING PERSONS COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES.

E. (AS REPORTED SEPTEL) WALDHEIM DID NOT STRESS THE MISSING PERSONS ISSUE DURING HIS VISIT.

4. "WHY IS THE U.S. STILL SO INTERESTED IN MISSING PERSONS?" TULUMEN ASKED. POL COUNS RESPONDED THAT WE CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE OF GREAT USEFULNESS IN DEMONSTRATING THAT THE TWO SIDES IN CYPRUS DO HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO WORK OUT THEIR PROBLEMS, AND WOULD, INSTEAD OF BEING USED NECESSARILY AS A PROPAGANDA TOOL, HELP TO DEFLECT AND ABSORB SOME OF THE PROPAGANDA PRESSURES NOW BEING APPLIED BY THE GREEK CYPRIOTS. HE URGED THAT THE MFA CONTINUE TRYING TO GET AUTHORIZATION
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TO WRAP UP THE AGREEMENT BEFORE WALDHEIM REACHED NICOSIA. TULUMEN SEEMED UNMOVED AND UNMOVEABLE.

5. COMMENT: IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE FOCUS OF U.S. EFFORT NOW SHOULD PROPERLY BE DIRECTED TO THE RESUMPTION OF INTER-COMMUNAL TALKS. WE ARE NOT SURE WHETHER THE MFA CAN HANDLE AT THE SAME TIME THE STAFF WORK REQUIRED FOR PRESENTING NEW AND IMPROVED POSITIONS ON TERRITORY AND THE CONSTITUTION WHILE FIGHTING THE BUREAUCRATIC BATTLE TO GET A NEW POSITION ON MISSING PERSONS. IF WE BELIEVE THAT THE MISSING PERSONS ISSUE IS OF SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE THAT IT DESERVES EQUAL OR NEARLY EQUAL ATTENTION WITHIN THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT AS THE INTERCOMMUNAL TALKS, WE WILL NEED TO HAVE AN EXTRAORDINARILY CONVINCING CASE AND MAKE IT DIRECTLY AT A HIGH LEVEL. BUT THE NEW ECEVIT GOVERNMENT FOR ITS PART CLEARLY BELIEVES THE MISSING PERSONS ISSUE HAS BEEN ECLIPSED BY ITS PLANNED NEW INITIATIVES. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT FOR THE TIME BEING AT LEAST FURTHER EFFORTS ON OUR PART ARE LIKELY TO BE MET WITH DISINTEREST AT BEST.
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